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Week of
October 14, 1940

Critics' THEATRE REVIEWS

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* *Asterisks indicate shows scheduled to play during the week of October 14, 1940.*
† *"Journey to Jerusalem" opened Saturday, October 5th, at the National Theatre.*
† *"It Happens on Ice" opened last Thursday, October 10th, at the Centre Theatre.*
† *"Boyd's Daughter" opened last Friday, October 11th, at the Booth Theatre.*

THEATRE REVIEWS IS A COMPLETE GUIDE AND RECORD TO THE NEW YORK SHOWS

Critics' Theatre Reviews brings you each week the complete reviews as they originally appeared in these New York papers

New York Sun — **New York Times**
New York Post — **New York Daily News**
New York Herald Tribune — **New York World-Telegram**

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"Boyd's Daughter"

Reprinted from NEW YORK TIMES, *October 12, 1940*

Whitford Kane and Hiram Sherman Appear in St. John Ervine's 'Boyd's Daughter'

By BROOKS ATKINSON

AMONG the vagaries of nature is the fact that a bright man can write a dull play. The bright man in this instance is St. John Ervine; the dull play is "Boyd's Daughter," which was acted at the Booth last evening. New York had a taste of his incendiary journalism when, as visiting drama critic of The New York World, he laid about him on all sides twelve years ago, continuing a course in knuckle-wrapping to which he had long since compelled London to submit.

As author of "John Ferguson," which he wrote in 1915, he gave the Theatre Guild its first bid for public favor. His "First Mrs. Fraser" gave Grace George an excellent acting part in 1929. Author of a number of books, one-time director of the Abbey Theatre, conversationalist, controversialist, hospitable friend to writers in general, Mr. Ervine is a bright man with a good many irons in the fire.

• • •

But the blunt fact remains that "Boyd's Daughter," as it is dubbed in this country, is a dull play. Mr. Ervine wrote it in 1935; it was acted a year later in Liverpool. Taking the style of the old Abbey Theatre bucolic, he is telling the story of a benevolent grocer and his daughter who keep a folksy shop in Northern Ireland. Once he gets the gossipy old crones out from under his feet Mr. Ervine concentrates on the task of letting Agnes Boyd choose between a fatuous young cleric and a rebellious young storekeeper. Since the storekeeper is sensationally unsuccessful, she naturally picks him. To make sure that his failure is overwhelming, Mr. Ervine takes the playwright's prerogative of burning his store out in the anti-climactic act. Whacked on the head with a burning timber, penniless and heart-broken, he is irresistable.

• • •

In the character of the kindhearted and patient old storekeeper—a part well played by Whitford Kane—Mr. Ervine is at his best. He values the venerable virtues, affection, generosity, good-will and also success. But when he invents the character of a young man you can bet your life that Mr. Ervine is going to give him a beating. In the fury of this changing world he has been conducting a one-man rebellion against the fatuities and arrogance of young people, and "Boyd's Daughter" gives him a field day. The ignorance and gracelessness of his two young men are monumental. After an evening before this play any rational man would resolve never to be young again.

• • •

In addition to being a scrappily written play, "Boyd's Daughter" is badly directed and poorly acted in the minor roles. In the chief part as the philosophical grocer Mr. Kane is his warm and likable self and a credit to any man's drama. As the disingenuous young parson, Hiram Sherman is immensely entertaining. Mr. Sherman's remarkable comic gift deserves better luck than he has had for the past two years. Helen Trenholme plays the part of Boyd's daughter with charm and sharpness — except for the last scene, which she probably does not believe in emotionally; and William Post, Jr., contributes a satisfactory job as the calamitous young shopkeeper.

But the acting of the town gossips would hardly meet the requirements of Summer theatre producing; and the direction of those scenes particularly is all fingers, toes and thumbs. As a householder in the embattled island of England, Mr. Ervine has worse things to think about now than comments on a five-year-old play from the other shore of the Atlantic. But one of his former colleagues wishes they could be more comforting.

Reprinted from NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, *October 12, 1940*

Boyd's Daughter Recalls Old-Time Folksy Plays

By SIDNEY B. WHIPPLE

BOYD'S DAUGHTER is the first play by St. John Ervine to reach Broadway in 11 years and, perhaps as a consequence, there is about it the faint suggestion of moth balls. It might, indeed, be a revival of one of those quaint and sentimental "folksy" plays that were so popular a generation ago. Or it might have been put together on the assembly line of a mass-production play factory.

From the moment handsome, stalward and stubborn John Haslett sets up his green grocery across the way from the shop of honest Andy Boyd and goes into a campaign of aggressive competition against the old man, and from the instant he meets Boyd's winsome daughter, Agnes, you know as well as I do that there can be but one happy conclusion—the handsome young man will lose his shirt, but he will win the daughter away from the fatuous (and somewhat godless) young clergyman to whom she is betrothed, and he will wind up by taking over not only the girl but the store as well.

Of this play, the thing I liked the most was an entract which had nothing to do with it. For 10 minutes, between scenes, Hiram Sherman stepped before the curtain and entertained the audience with a serio-comic explanation of the delay in shifting scenery, of the troubles of a director, and of various vicissitudes experienced by the company and the management.

Mr. Ervine locates his unimportant events in a small town of Ulster and presents the usual stock characters who seem to infest Irish towns, north or south of the border—the philosophical and kindly grocer, the modern upstart businessman, the female gossips, the sweet old clergyman (Presbyterian, since this is Ulster) and his fatuous successor, the town shrew, the somewhat cracked housemaid, the sex-possessed old maid, all of them rambling conversationally, loquatiously, amiably and to no particular purpose except to fill the stage from 8:40 until after 11 o'clock.

Mr. Ervine is said to have written this play specifically for his old friend, Whitford Kane, but I can discover in this no overwhelming act of friendship.

Mr. Kane acted easily and genially in his part as the green grocer. Mr. Sherman, in addition to his impromptu curtain speech, extracted as much wit as was humanly possible from the character of the young minister, and Miss Helen Trenholme looked adorable and acted pleasantly as Boyd's daughter. William Post, Jr., gave a stock performance of the honest young merchant with modern ideas, and the other members of the cast, notably Esther Mitchell, Grace Mills, Eda Heinemann and J. P. Wilson, acquitted themselves honorably.

With the aid of Lipton Tea, Crosse and Blackwell and Huntley and Palmer posters, property fruit and real groceries, Johannes Larsen contributed a realistic setting.

Boyd's Daughter leaves the theatrical season much as it found it, but a little the worse for wear.

"Boyd's Daughter"

Reprinted from NEW YORK SUN, *October 12, 1940*

'Boyd's Daughter,' St. John Ervine's Comedy, Opens at the Booth

By RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

ST. JOHN ERVINE can be a peppery critic when he chooses, but he is a most affable playwright. His "Boyd's Daughter" reached the Booth Theater last evening after some vicissitudes, including a few changes of title, and it is as affable as a play could well be—comfortable and talkative, full of gentle humor and with everything turning out right in the end. The world may prove too strident for it, but it sets the world a good example.

Mr. Ervine is concerned with the good people of Donaghreagh, a village of Northern Ireland. His people are really good people, too. The village gossip is kindly at heart, the put-upon old maid turns on her unmalicious persecutors in the nicest of fashions and when a bumptious young man starts a rival grocery store, Andrew Boyd is a model of amiability. Mr. Boyd runs the grocery store of his fathers, but he accepts competition without animus. His daughter is, to be sure, a little perturbed for a time, but she outgrows it.

During her period of perturbation she does, absent-mindedly, almost marry a bouncing but wily clergyman, who is plotting his way to the pulpit of the Presbyterian church and hopes to scoop up any other goodies he can find on the way. Miss Boyd is, a little incomprehensibly, deluded by this for a couple of acts, but in the end she discovers that the young grocer is the man for her. The audience has known this after an approximate five minutes of the first act and has waited, without suspense to be sure, but in a mood of contented anticipation. In reporting this I do not disclose a secret which Mr. Ervine would like to have kept.

Mr. Ervine has few secrets in "Boyd's Daughter." It is open plotting, openly arrived at. The villain is, if nothing else, too comically obvious to win out; the young hero too virtuous and unlucky to fail; the girl too charming not to achieve happiness. All things are orderly in Mr. Ervine's play and, if not precisely uproarious, gently gay. Characters are delightful in it, and reasonably resemble humans as humans might better be. It is an affair of humor, not of wit. Watching it, your mind may wander on occasion but always with the assurance that it can return at will and curl up happily by Mr. Ervine's warm fireside. Things will be much where they were when your mind went away. It is gentle, unimportant, contenting drama.

It is acted as it should be. It is dedicated to Whitford Kane, who plays Boyd and plays with just the comfortable spirit the part requires. Hiram Sherman, however, steals most of it. The word "steals" is unduly harsh. With a richly comic performance—and an extremely entertaining little curtain speech to explain scene changes—Mr. Sherman wafts the play his way.

Helen Trenholme and William Post, Jr., are handsome and appealing travelerr on the roughened pathway of true love. Estelle Reilley, Bernice Vert, Esther Mitchell, Eda Heinemann and Grace Mills are amusing companions for an evening, and J. P. Wilson plays one of the few serious roles with gentle dignity. Except once or twice, when technical difficulties have floored the author, it is a soothing little play.

'Boyd's Daughter'

A comedy in three acts by St. John Ervine; directed by Hiram Sherman; settings and lighting by Johannes Larsen; presented at the Booth Theater on October 11, 1940, by Copley Productions. The cast:

Andy Haverson	Walter Kelly
Andrew Boyd	Whitford Kane
Agnes Boyd	Helen Trenholme
Miss McClurg	Grace Mills
John Haslett	William Post Jr.
Mrs. McBratney	Estelle Reilley
Mrs. Clotworthy	Bernice Vert
Miss Logan	Esther Mitchell
Rev. Ernest Dunwoody, M.A.	Hiram Sherman
William Henry Doak	Truman Smith
Carrie	Eda Heinemann
Rev. Arthur Patterson	J. P. Wilson

Reprinted from NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, *October 12, 1940*

Ulster Scene

By RICHARD WATTS, Jr.

ST. JOHN ERVINE, who is by no means a placid man, has written a very placid play, which his local producers call "Boyd's Daughter." For those who remember Mr. Ervine as playwright, critic, cantankerous essayist or professional scold, the sweetness and light that pervade this little comedy of life in an Ulster village may come as rather a surprise. The battling Ulsterman continues to disapprove of certain phases of modern youth and to believe with characteristic violence that the old ways are the best, and these vigorous opinions do give his play an occasional air of indignation, but, on the whole, this "Boyd's Daughter" is just a gentle chronicle of quaint and amiable people and their charming ways. This surprising air of affection gives the comedy a friendly and likeable air, but I still think that Mr. Ervine is at his best when he is angry. "Boyd's Daughter" is great gentleness transmuted into great dullness.

• • •

What liveliness "Boyd's Daughter" does possess comes to it from three attractive performances in leading roles. Whitford Kane, for whom the comedy is said to have been written, plays the mellow grocer whose shop is the center of village gossip, and handles the role with that quiet, friendly competence that has proved of such help to so many dramas. Miss Helen Trenholme, one of the most interesting and attractive of the younger actresses, is the daughter of the title, and she manages the part with such straightforward charm that she brings surprising life to a conventional ingenue role. The third of the life-giving performances is contributed by that excellent comedian, Hiram Sherman, who plays a pompous and conniving young clergyman with richly humorous unction. Mr. Sherman, incidentally, enlivens a lengthy intermission during change of scenes by an engagingly informal curtain talk which adds to the brightness of the evening, even if it does curious things to the mood of the play.

• • •

Undoubtedly there is something pleasant about these uneventful little chronicles of village life, with their quaint characters, easy-going charm, mild story-telling and quiet humor. In the case of "Boyd's Daughter," however, the author's effort to capture the quiet, peaceful mood of the Ulster village of Donaghreagh and the modest adventures of its citizens has resulted in a play which seems so static, mild and peaceful that an air of dullness hangs over almost the entire proceedings. The conflict between the ambitious clergyman and the bitter young grocer from Belfast for the hand of the elderly grocer's daughter is, even when interrupted by an off-stage fire, so peaceful that it would require far more skill in the way of characterization, comment or observation of life to give the proper vitality to the play. The comedy, by the way, was originally called "Boyd's Shop," but the local sponsors apparently thought that there were more box-office possibilities in the title "Boyd's Daughter."

"Boyd's Daughter"

Reprinted from NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, *October 12, 1940*

"Boyd's Daughter," Simple Play About Simple People, at Booth

"Boyd's Daughter," comedy by St. John Ervine. Produced by Copley Productions, Inc., at the Booth Theatre, New York, Oct. 11, 1940.

★ ★+

By BURNS MANTLE

I HAVE an idea that St. John Ervine wrote "Boyd's Shop," which has now become "Boyd's Daughter" at the Booth, with little idea it ever would be played outside of what was (and still is, thanks be) the British Empire.

It is a simple Irish comedy, concerned with no weightier matters than the courtship of a bold lad who barged into an Ulster village and set up a grocery shop in opposition to Andrew Boyd, who had been serving the community for years and years, as his ancestors had served it before him.

You know the character and content of the whole business ten minutes after curtain rise, and waiting for the obvious end of the tale does not make for too satisfying an evening.

Of course we who know his work and his mind have a feeling that Mr. Ervine should be writing dramas out of the distressing present that might match in forcefulness and keenness of characterization his "John Ferguson" and "Jane Clegg." Or at least his "First Mrs. Fraser."

Someone asked him the other day why he wasn't at this more serious work and he answered, a little pathetically, as he waved his hand toward the London that lies within bomb range of his home, that he had tried it and failed.

Well, meantime here is "Boyd's Daughter" which, given a chance, will please a majority of the audiences that will buy it. It is simply written and agreeably acted.

There are several good character comedy lines in it, and a homely humor that is not cheapened. Its people, you feel, are true to their setting and the story they relate is not too stagey.

The love conflict is a little baldly exposed. Agnes Boyd, the grocer's attractive daughter, is desired in marriage by the brash but honest fellow who has opened a grocery shop right across the street. (Must have sneaked his stock in overnight, seeing no one was aware of his coming.)

Agnes is also wanted by a sly young curate come recently to town in hope of displacing the aging minister of the local diocese. The bold boy overplays his boldness, and the unworthy curate overplays his subtle schemings with expected results.

Hiram Sherman, an actor, as you know, of resource and ability, plays the minister and also staged the play. A good performance, but I think he errs a little in his search for situations.

Not Likely

For example, he has his minister awkardly practicing a speech in the Boyds' home that he would most certainly have kept to himself, and he holds a couple of the play's most inquisitive gossips on stage during the progress of a fire that would have surely drawn them away. Trivial items, but ruinous to a comedy's consistency.

Whitford Kane is as lovable as the philosophical Boyd as you would expect him to be. Helen Trenholme is as dear a heroine as any comedy needs. Edna Heinemann, Grace Mills, Esther Mitchell are amusing village characters and William Post, Jr., makes the hero no more conventional than I suppose the text demands.

Satisfactory sets and lighting by Johannes Larsen. Audience approval went with last night's opening.

Reprinted from NEW YORK POST, *October 12, 1940*

Mr. Ervine's Comedy, "Boyd's Daughter"

By JOHN MASON BROWN

ALTHOUGH St. John Ervine has made his valuable contributions to the theatre, I regret to report that "Boyd's Daughter" is not one of them. It is a talky little comedy, as garrulous as some of Mr. Ervine's Sunday articles in the Observer. Village gossip is its plot. Character is supposedly its business. And its concern for three loquacious and unconvincing acts is nothing more worth making than how the daughter of an Ulster grocer at last decides to marry the impoverished young man who wanted to become her father's rival in business instead of accepting the hand of an ambitious clergyman.

Becalmed as Mr. Ervine's comedy is, it has its occasional spurts of gaiety. It can also claim one or two valid characters in the midst of its stagefull of broad and regrettable caricatures. But it is too trivial for comfort, and too old-fashioned in technique and approach for its own well-being. Sitting before it, even when it is being played by such engaging actors as Whitford Kane and Hiram Sherman, is enough to explain why, when it was first produced in England four years back, it got no farther than Liverpool.

Mr. Kane is always a lovable performer. His goodness illumines every character he plays. It is as welcome a feature of his acting as his smile, his brogue, his baggy pants, or his pipe for that matter. In "Boyd's Daughter" (originally "Boyd's Shop") he gives a very pleasant performance. And Mr. Sherman? Well, Mr. Sherman as the Rev. Ernest Dunwoody, M.A., creates a minister who might have stepped right out of Trollope, and plays him with a delicious Trollopian sense of comedy.

A Dull Evening

Even so in this trifle at the Booth Mr. Ervine fails his performers as signally as he fails his audience. Although Helen Trenholme and William Post, Jr., are earnest enough as the girl and the young grocer, what they are acting is not worth the doing and could never be made interesting. Even Eda Heinemann is faced with the awful ordeal of an awful scene of terror as a hell-fearing maid. The other actors do all those tiresome and exaggerated things which villagers are always forced to do to achieve local atmosphere in poor plays about villages.

Mr. Sherman stepped out of character last night to make a very funny curtain speech between the two scenes of the first act. He did it delightfully. He confessed he was stalling. He was "covering" a change in scenery. The play, now being given in three acts, was meant to be produced in four, he confessed. This modernization of Mr. Ervine's script, said Mr. Sherman, had been achieved by the simple device of playing the first and second acts as scenes in a single act. Hence the backstage delay.

But irresistible as is Mr. Sherman's personality, his curtain speech is something he could well get along without in the future. Although he did it well, he ought not to have done it. It was as amateurish in spirit as was the worst of Mr. Ervine's playwriting in its execution.

"It Happens on Ice"

Reprinted from NEW YORK SUN, *October 11, 1940*

'It Happens on Ice,' With Joe Cook, Opens at the Center Theater

By RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

PROBABLY no animal has more grace than the human, if you put the human on skates, and always providing that the human selected is one of those fortunate ones who can stand up on skates. With blades under him, the expert can teach balance to the cat and effortless insouciance to the bird. He can swoop in perfect circles with the barest tensing of a muscle; the tiniest push of a toe sets him swirling like no top that ever was.

You may observe much more than human agility now at the Center Theater, where "It Happens on Ice" opened last evening. They have frozen over the whole of the Center's expansive stage and built slippery planes down to it. They have engaged some of the most precocious boys and girls of the skating world to do their extravagant capers. The most untutored of them can easily perform the impossible and the really accomplished—the Caley sisters, say, and Hedi Stenuf and Mary Jane Yeo—can do tricks which stagger the mind. Beside all of them the best of the dry land dancers seem heavy and muscle bound. They also seem pleasantly human.

There is something abstract about such skating as they are doing in the extravaganza at the Center. It is distant and mathematical; an adventure in pure aesthetics. After the first few minutes none of it seems quite real, except possibly Joe Cook. Joe Cook enters on his own feet, just when you had begun to suppose that no one was stodgy enough to use feet any more. He makes jokes like a natural man—not very good jokes, on the whole, but still something the mind can get hold of. Mr. Cook, making jokes that aren't terribly good and exploiting comic inventions which ridicule perfection, is soothingly human.

Along with the skating, people sing now and then. Their small, distant voices impeach faintly on the vastness of the Center Theater and the lyrics and music of their songs tinkle distantly. Then some more perfect skaters come out and skate some more, doing almost precisely the things which the perfect skaters who proceeded them had done. The costumes change and no doubt the performers, but you couldn't prove it by me. As far as I am concerned, all of "It Happens on Ice" is mechanically perfect, and pretty to look at for a while and very, very far away. There seems to be something about skates that makes even a pretty girl vanish coldly into the abstract.

"It Happens on Ice" is beautiful in its fashion, and now and then—thanks to Mr. Cook—faintly amusing, and it is obviously sufficiently expensive. And if I seem to be implying that it is beautiful but pretty dumb I am, for once, getting precisely the effect I am aiming at.

'IT HAPPENS ON ICE'

An ice show in two acts; staged and devised by Leon Leonidoff; settings, costumes and lighting by Norman Bel Geddes; choreography by Catherine Littlefield, assisted by Robert Linden; musical director, Erno Rapee; lyrics by Al Stillman; songs by Vernon Duke, Fred E. Ahlert and Peter de Rose. Presented at the Center Theater on October 10, 1940, by Sonja Henie and Arthur Wirtz. In the cast are Joe Cook, Hedi Stenuf, the Caley Sisters, Le Verne, Jo Ann Dean, Mary Jane Yeo, Lloyd Baxter, Gene Berg, Dr. A. Douglas Neiles, the Four Bruises and others.

Reprinted from NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE, *October 11, 1940*

Cook on Ice

By RICHARD WATTS, Jr.

ALTHOUGH it is a lavish and handsome ice show that has been installed at the Center Theatre, the big news there this morning is that Joe Cook is back with us. While "It Happens on Ice" is filled with young, good-looking and athletic boys and girls of innumerable races, performing miracles of graceful agility on skates, it is the great Cook, no male Sonja Henie if you come right down to it, who is the bright, shining star of the occasion. Skating, even as brilliantly done as it is in the new revue, tends to pall after the first hour, but Joe Cook has the true comedian's virtue of getting even better as he goes along. Whether leading his latest Fuller Construction Orchestra, running a crazy restaurant, jousting with a trick reindeer, juggling with old-time skill or just chatting amiably with the customers, Mr. Cook continues to be the delightful comic he always has been, and I would have enjoyed "It Happens on Ice" far more if it had contained more Cook and less skating.

• • •

Not that I have anything against the fine art of skating. Chorus formations, ballets and acrobatic numbers on ice have both charm and beauty, and, even though I might have trouble in telling Mary Jane Yeo from Jo Ann Dean and Le Verne from Hedi Stenuf, I admire the skill of all of them to an enthusiastic degree. In addition, "It Happens on Ice" offers great pictorial loveliness in Norman Bel Geddes's settings, costumes and lighting, and achieves high standards of visual beauty time after time. I cannot help suspecting, however, that even the finest skating tends to become monotonous and that the variety possible to the masters of this particular art is decidedly limited. Great ingenuity has been employed to give at least the simulation of variety, but during the second hour I, for one, became so anxious to see a comedian that I would have settled for some lesser personage than Joe Cook.

• • •

The Center Theater is so large a playhouse that it would seem to offer great problems for Mr. Cook, who is intimate and friendly rather than spacious and distant in his comedy. But there is no vanquishing a Cook so easily, and it did not take the Sage of Lake Hopatcong long to vanquish the unfriendly reaches of this vast theater. Even if he were not the prodigiously funny fellow that he is, he would be a great comfort to all of us through the warm geniality of his singularly winning personality. In "It Happens on Ice" he takes us into his confidence from the start and it is not long before he has made the Center Theater seem for the time being an intimate playhouse. It is a pleasure to report, too, that his juggling seems better than ever and that he is surrounded by a properly zany crew of associates, even for those of us who still long to see Dave Chasen at his side.

• • •

Mr. Cook is not the only non-skater in the cast of the ice revue. Miss Joan Edwards and Felix Knight come out from time to time to do a little singing, but since the music that has been devised for the new show is less than exciting, their contribution to the evening's entertainment is not enormous. The rest is skating, and since skating shows seem good enough for Madison Square Garden, they should be good enough, I suppose, for the Center Theater. Personally, I wish that the skaters in "It Happens on Ice" had been used in the manner in which the girls and the vaudeville acts are employed in the Ed Wynn show. In a word or two, I would like to have seen them come on occasionally while the star comic was resting, instead of working it the other way around. But if we must have ice shows it is well to have them as beautiful as the new carnival at the Center Theater and it is wonderful to have Joe Cook in them.

"It Happens on Ice"

Reprinted from NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, *October 11, 1940*

Sonja Henie's Ice Show an Eye-Capturing Pageant

By SIDNEY B. WHIPPLE

IT MIGHT be questioned whether a skating carnival in semi-theatrical form belongs to the department of drama, ballet or winter sports, for Sonja Henie's spectacular new production at the Center Theater has elements of all three fields and gives emphasis to none. It is a glittering, colorful and eye-capturing pageant; it cost thousands to produce; its settings and costuming are brilliant. And I am going to be ungracious enough right here to say that an hour of it is enough for me.

For all its glitter and rapid motion It Happens on Ice is curiously static, and once the eye has been filled until there is room for no more the performance becomes repetitious and, to me at least, tiring. Perhaps we miss Sonja Henie's personality, for the great star of the ice is not skating this year but is supervising the show from a mezzanine seat. Perhaps the mechanical difficulties that seemed to overwhelm the stage crew last night had something to do with it. Perhaps the show is overlong.

Then there is the matter of Joe Cook, the eminent inventor, juggler and fable teller. Mr. Cook is in fine and genial humor. Some of his funniest gadgets are called into action and some of his funniest stooges are on hand; yet last night it appeared to many of us as though he were performing through the wrong end of a telescope, and Mr. Cook needs a small, intimate theater for his whimsical confidences.

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With these complaints duly registered we can pass to pleasanter thoughts. None of man's various methods of locomotion, with the possible exception of flight, contains so much of the grace and poetry of motion as expert ballet skating, and Miss Henie's company is one of experts. It is headed by the graceful Hedi Stenuf of Vienna, who, like Miss Henie, has come into the professional field by way of the Olympic games. Twelve years of ballet study, combined with her skating practice, have given her exceptional co-ordination, and her solo work was highly interesting.

For greater inspiration, however, I would turn to Miss Le Verne (first name kept secret on the program), whose dance rhythm in two numbers, Don't Blow That Horn, Gabriel, and The Ice Has It, was breath taking. The other exceptionally clever artists were Dorothy and Hazel Caley, whose "duet" stopped the show.

On the male side considerable prominence is given to Lloyd (Skippy) Baxter, who is also making his professional debut after a long career in the amateur skating ranks. Mr. Baxter was at his best, it seemed to me, in a ballet called The Legend of the Lake, although many of his other numbers were more intricate and perhaps more difficult in the matter of leaps and pirrouets. It was this ballet, by the way, that most nearly approached the classical dance form.

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From the scenic standpoint Norman Bel Geddes contributed some smashing effects, but the height of his effort was reached in a gorgeous black and white setting that dominated the second half of the show. It was in this setting, too, that Miss Edwina Blades, an English girl had her great opportunity to show why she has been a continental favorite, and she accepted it beautifully, with the aid of Mr. Baxter.

The music in general was paced to the requirements for fancy skating and had little distinction except in one instance. Mitchell Parish and Peter de Rose have written a number called The Moon Fell in the River which is haunting in its melody. The singing, by Joan Edwards and Felix Knight, is about what one would expect between pictures at Mr. Rockefeller's other amusement center across the way.

Mr. Cook's gadgets and he himself are as cheerfully amusing as ever, and it is a pity that he seems lost in the icebergs far, far up in Mr. Bel Geddes' frozen north.

For unspoken wit, however, I refer you to a little item called Goldilocks and the three bears, skated or danced by Mary Jane Yeo, Arthur Nelles, Kenny Williams and Faul Castle. Whoever devised that number had a fine sense of humor and the skaters executed it to perfection.

With all these fine things in Miss Henie's first producing venture it is distressing to report that it leaves me cold, mentally and perhaps physically, but that is the unfortunate fact.

Reprinted from NEW YORK TIMES, *October 11, 1940*

'It Happens on Ice' Brings Skating Indoors at the Center Theater in Radio City

By BROOKS ATKINSON

BY REMODELING the patient and obliging stage at the Center Theatre again they have managed to bring skating indoors in Radio City. "It Happens on Ice," they call it in the program, although they call it "a musical icetravaganza" in their public relations, and they opened it with floodlights in Sixth Avenue last evening. At some time there may have been more beautiful skating than Hedi Stenuf contributes to this ice revue, although this reporter never happened to see it. But it is probably safe to assert that skating never before had such a gorgeous production.

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For Norman Bel Geddes, the protean scene-designer, has created a cool, silvery production under lustrous lighting; and Leon Leonidoff, the protean director, has staged a production of modern enchantments. Where quite a number of orchestra seats used to be, an ice-covered stage sweeps out into the auditorium, and some of the finest skaters in the world, beguilingly costumed, skim swiftly across the glazed surface like demi-gods.

Skating is motion that is full of exultation. The speed seems to give the curves and pirouettes a lean, spinning loveliness. And skating breeds an extraordinary race of attractive boys and girls with long, slender legs and pliant bodies. There is never anything in the show-shops much more beautiful than the ballet entitled "Legend of the Lake," which Miss Stenuf, Lloyd Baxter and a large supporting cast skate with matchless skill, or the formal ball that Edwina Blades and Mr. Baxter skate in the second act.

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This is not the whole story. Even the finest skating in large doses induces a sort of unappreciative drowsiness that is not becoming to the theatre. To counteract the soporifics of skating appreciation, Joe Cook, the good old skate of the revue stage, makes several ingratiating appearances. A small boy at heart, he comes with several truckloads of insane gadgets and some sound knockabout stooges; and, without raising his voice, Joe manages to introduce some chuckles in the midst of the grind of sharp skates on the ice.

To do Joe full justice, the Center Theatre is considerably too large. "It Happens on Ice" never gathers him up into the carnival mood of a revue. And the songs by Vernon Duke, Fred E. Ahlert and Peter de Rose do not make much impression on those stately spaces.

For "It Happens on Ice" is dedicated to the nimbleness and grace of sharp, steel runners. As a designer, Mr. Geddes is a man of impeccable taste and heroic imagination. In the great, silvery spaces of his production some splendid skaters are translating motion into fleet beauty. It is not much like the old frog pond where most of us awkwardly began with double-runners.

"It Happens on Ice"

Reprinted from NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, *October 11, 1940*

This "It Happens on Ice" Is a Little Like a Frozen Aquacade

"It Happens on Ice," revue assembled and produced by Sonja Henie and Arthur Wirtz at the Center theatre, New York, Oct. 10, 1940.

★ ★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

ICE shows, as you know if you have ever been to the Madison Square Garden when they were staging one there, sometimes with and sometimes without the marvelous Sonja Henie, are largely pantomime.

Dozens and dozens of beautiful skaters glide in and out, and whirl and dance, or dance and whirl, usually with exquisite grace and smiling assurance, while a light man sprays them with colored sparklers.

An ice revue, like "It Happens on Ice," which began an engagement at the Center Theatre last night, is a Madison Square Garden ice show in miniature, plus Joe Cook and gadgets, Joan Edwards and Felix Knight with songs and Leon Leonidoff deploying a Radio City Music Hall ballet shod with shining steel.

It Is Different

The result is a different kind of entertainment than any we have before seen in a theatre. Norman Bel Geddes has built the Rockefellers a grand little ice rink where the stage of the Center used to be, and where seven or eight rows of the orchestra seats also used to be.

(He took in all the critics' seats, incidentally, so the gentlemen of the press were spotted in the mezzanine balcony last night, which is also a fine location to see from).

In the revue Mr. Cook offers a familiar Joe Cook routine, punctuating the ice numbers with enough laughter to justify his job. But Joe is a little out of his element on ice. The skaters sort of push him around, even without intending to. And so does the director. But he will work into the spirit of the entertainment in a day or two. His old club juggling act was a help to him last night.

The skaters are as wonderful as you might expect them to be. Particularly the Caley sisters, and Hedi Stenuf, who comes from the other side and could wear a lot of Olympic medals pinned to her chest if she wore anything on her chest to pin them to.

And a handsome young fellow named Lloyd Baxter (Skippy to his friends). And a smart little trick named Le Verne. And Gene Berg and Meryl Baxter. And Jo Ann Dean. And Mary Jane Yeo.

It is difficult to separate them as to skill. They all seem incredibly graceful and agile. Some, I suspect, do a couple more twirls than others. But I couldn't say.

Nice Ballets

There are two or three elaborate ballets. One, "Your Presence Is Requested," is a grand ball in black and white. I thought it was stunning. And another concerned with a hunt in the forest and the romance of a swan, as Joe Cook explained, who came to life when the Prince kissed her and was prepared to be registered as Mrs. Smith after that.

Miss Edwards and Mr. Knight sang what threatens to be a hit song, "The Moon Fell in the River"—"when I kissed you last night"—think of that—and Miss Edwards added another likely number entitled "Long Ago," to accompany the black and white ball number.

Mr. Geddes' lights and costumes are satisfying in coloring and his setting, which includes a long ramp rising from the ice surface down which the skaters slide, is effective.

You might not agree that "It Happens on Ice" is something to rave about, and probably it isn't. But it is at least something to talk about a lot, and that should keep it a show feature the better part of the season.

Reprinted from NEW YORK POST, *October 11, 1940*

Joe Cook Appears in "It Happens on Ice"

By JOHN MASON BROWN

SONJA HENIE and Arthur Wirtz have given their huge, costly, often beautiful spectacle at the Center a title almost lethal in its accuracy. "It Happens on Ice" does take place on ice. Ice is its setting; ice its source of wonder; and ice the unrelenting villain that renders the evening tedious.

Although Joe Cook, one of the great performers of our stage, is present with some of his best inventions and happiest lunacies, he too is ice-bound. His Cheshire grin loses its warmth in the chilling depths of such a house. The cold rink upon which he now performs causes frost-bite to overtake his liveliest patter. Even he cannot quite thaw out the proceedings.

Grace there is, abundant grace, in this mammouth Hans Brinker carnival which the program describes as a "musical icetravaganza." There is also beauty—the undulant, swift-gliding beauty of skaters whose skill is brilliant, whose motions are effortless, and whose daring is matched only by their precision. Then there is the loveliness, genuine and beguiling, of Norman Bel Geddes' costumes, which are models in variety, color and imagination, and in some of the better uses this same Mr. Geddes has made of the Appia-like levels of his impressive inner stage.

But a little skating goes a long way. Oddly enough it goes a much longer way in a theatre than it does at the Madison Square Garden. Skaters, however masterly, soon begin to be the victims of their skates. Defy them as they will, they cannot shake them off. They are slaves of the very blades they use so wonderfully. They have no other choice than to seem to repeat themselves.

Their suppleness may be extraordinary; their grace without limit; their skill as boundless as the frozen north. But theirs is a restricted medium. The uniformity of their excellence breeds monotony. One tires ultimately of being amazed by them. And when amazement has vanished, when the wonderful has soon established itself as a commonplace, why then the very audacities of skaters can begin to seem strangely tame.

If "It Happens on Ice" resembles a frosted version of "The Acquacade" gone indoors, Mr. Rose must still be congratulated. He has been wiser by the clock in exhibiting his swimmers. One hour is enough for a swimming show. Two hours and more of skating is much too much.

No floor of ice, however miraculous, innovational, or expensive; and no curtain of glass, even if it does contain some 315,720,000 glass fibers and does not burn or stain, can hide this sorry fact. Even Joe Cook cannot do this. I doubt if Sonja Henie herself could, had she chosen to appear in the huge show she is now co-sponsoring.

Amazing as are Lloyd Baxter and Hedi Stenuf and the whole corps of superlative Brinkers, and lovely as are some of the effects, the production ends up by being a fozen asset. Thank heaven for the sake of the theatre that Liza and the bloodhounds had no skates. The drama would have been robbed of a lot of excitement.

"Journey to Jerusalem"

Reprinted from NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, *October 7, 1940*

"Journey to Jerusalem" Has Its Premiere at the National

"Journey to Jerusalem," drama by Maxwell Anderson. Produced by the Playwrights' Company at the National Theatre, New York, Oct. 5, 1940.

★ ★ ★

By BURNS MANTLE

I THINK your interest in the new Maxwell Anderson drama, "Journey to Jerusalem," which the Playwrights' Company produced at the National Theatre Saturday night, will depend largely upon the depth of your feeling for and reaction to the literature and the legends of the Bible.

It is not of itself a compelling drama. Its beauty is found in its text rather than in its action. Its drama is dependent upon the sensitiveness of the beholder's imagination. Like most Anderson drama it must be read to be really seen.

"Journey to Jerusalem" is the story of the boy Jesus. It revolves leisurely about what little is known of the pilgrimage on which He accompanied His parents from Nazareth to Jerusalem for the celebration of the Passover the year He was 12.

In the Temple

The high light of that journey, in the memory of most of us who have made a comfort rather than a profession of our religion, is the picture of the young Jesus calmly facing the wise men of the temple and confounding them with His logic. It was there that Joseph and Mary (Miriam) found Him when He had been lost for hours and they had grown a bit panicky.

The incident, naturally, is prominently written into the play. Not in a scene copied from the Hoffman painting, but as a minor and quite casual adventure of the journey.

The outstanding dramatic moment of "Journey to Jerusalem" is staged before the gates of the city. Here Joseph's party is questioned to check Herod Antipas' search for a 12-year-old Messiah reported to have escaped the elder Herod's slaughter of the innocents twelve years before.

Jesus (or Jeshua by the Old Testament record) is saved by Ishmael, who is continuing a tribal rebellion against the Romans in the name of the defeated Judah.

Ishmael, accepting the young Jeshua as a Messiah, registers Him as his nephew come from the desert and the mountains. The appearance of the boy belies the relationship, but He passes the guard. This is a dramatic moment, and forcefully acted.

Appealing Scenes

Otherwise I fear you will find "Journey to Jerusalem" a static drama punctuated by fragmentary bits of holding beauty. There is a shining grace in the luminous detachment of Jesus, and appeal in the secret that Miriam carries in her heart.

There is rugged power in the appearance of the rebel Ishmael and the militant loyalty with which he protects the newly discovered messenger of God. There is an appealing gentleness in the paternal solicitude of the trusting Joseph, and a nice simplicity in the etherealized wonder of the lad who answers the wise men, saying that when one is born to God's work the help of God will surely be given him.

But there is really little drama in the play, because there was little known drama in the middle years of Jesus' life. In the situation with which "Prologue to Glory" was closed the young Lincoln was starting for Springfield. The whole tragic panorama of Lincoln's life was there uncovered in the spectator's imagination. But leaving Jesus at the age of 12, and trying to bridge the eighteen years that followed with nothing for the imagination to feed upon, is difficult. The situation is naturally robbed of conviction.

Again those who surround the young Messiah are not themselves an interesting group. Joseph and Miriam, Ishmael and Herod, have a little something to offer, but not much. The others are no more than merely players shown in a beautiful but distracting setting.

Sidney Lumet plays the young Jesus with great sincerity and with every evidence of careful and earnest study. Something of an inner light shines through his reading and the gentleness of his conception. But he still is a boy of 12 obviously coached for the task and conscious of his responsibilities.

The Ishmael of Arnold Moss is a fine, forceful, intelligent characterization. The Joseph of Horace Braham and the Miriam of Arlene Francis are alike impressive in sincerity and simplicity. Frederick Tozere's Herod is haunted and haunting. The others serve.

Jo Mielziner's settings are solid and impressive, gaining depth and breadth through a unique use of lights. Elmer Rice's diection seems thorough and sympathetic, and less bewildered than it easily might have been.

The opening night's audience was attentive and earnestly responsive.

Reprinted from NEW YORK WORLD-TELEGRAM, *October 7, 1940*

Journey to Jerusalem Dignified, Beautiful

By SIDNEY B. WHIPPLE

MAXWELL ANDERSON'S new play, Journey to Jerusalem is a dignified and beautiful commentary on the never-ending tragedy of social oppression, which seeks, I think, to draw a significant parallel between the yoke of the Caesars and the yoke of Hitler. Its text is found in the historical accounts of the New Testament. Its period is specifically those few days in Jerusalem when the boy, Jesus, was awakening to a knowledge of His mission and to the sorrowful realization of the command to become a sacrifice for humanity.

Mr. Anderson tells the story of a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for observance of the ritual of Passover, by a Jewish family from Galilee of whom the 12-year-old Jesus was one. It treats of corruption and madness in high places, of distress and poverty and hunger in low. It deals with Roman slavery imposed by an Augustus but implemented by a subservient Herod and made absolute by a hypocritical Sanhedrin. It emphasizes the need of spiritual leadership and ends on a note of quiet triumph in the discovery of the Messiah.

All this is related in smoothly flowing phrases and with colorful imagery. There are times when it reaches deep into the heart and others—unfortunately—when it wanders into the field of abstract philosophy. It is never uninteresting, although there are many long passages when it becomes moral preachment from a rostrum rather than a drama.

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This is an important play. Yet I must come reluctantly to the conclusion that despite its importance and the many magnificent things that are said and done in it it can not achieve a popular success. I hope I am wrong, but this conclusion is based on several things, not the least of which is the strange response to a recent play, Family Portrait which was based on the same Messianic theme, which had the benefit of simplicity—which the Anderson play has not—and which was marked by the noteworthy acting of Judith Anderson. Family Portrait was a homely, human and compassionate account of the mystery, in which the figure of the Christ was never seen, but in which His spiritual presence was always sensed. Mr. Anderson presents the more difficult task of placing the youthful Jesus in our presence and of showing Him tortured and torn between childish fancies and misconceptions of temporal glory and the uncompromising and frightful reality of sacrifice—the dawn of realization that He is to be misunderstood and reviled, that His crown is not to be of jewels but of thorns, and that he is to meet not a glorious but an ignominous death.

Such a task has never been easy, even when an author possesses the high lyric quality of Mr. Anderson, and my conclusion that the public will not respond as it should is founded less upon distrust of Mr. Anderson's power as a writer than upon the superstition and common prejudice that counted so heavily in the failure of Family Portrait.

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The Playwrights' Company has given Mr. Anderson's work an excellent cast, although one without stars, and it has given Jo Mielziner carte blanche to construct the solid settings, the flat rooftops, the stone platforms and parapets typical of the Holy Land. The magnificence of the settings lies in their color, most of them being painted with lights. Millia Davenport's costumes are vivid.

Sidney Lumet plays the part of Jeshua (Jesus) with a solemn simplicity that was becoming to the role. He was rather at his best in the scene within the Temple wherein the boy, Jesus, replies out of his wisdom to the Sanhedrin.

Of the others, in the large cast, the chief honors go to Arnold Moss as Ishmael, the "robber" prophet of the hills, whose performance was little short of inspired. Horace Braham, as Joseph, gave a sweet understanding and at times powerful presentation of a kindly, human father, of solid virtue and faith.

There is a modest amount of honest humor in the character of Shadrach, and Charles De Sheim, who played so successfully last year in The Time of Your Life, does an outstanding job with it. The remainder of the cast were fully co-operative under Elmer Rice's more than able direction.

"Journey to Jerusalem"

Reprinted from NEW YORK SUN, *October 7, 1940*

Maxwell Anderson's 'Journey to Jerusalem' Opens at the National

By RICHARD LOCKRIDGE

MAXWELL Anderson writes of the childhood of Jesus in "Journey to Jerusalem," which opened at the National Theater Saturday evening. He shows Jesus as a boy of twelve, looking with a boy's human eyes on a mission half comprehended. He shows the fear in a child's eyes when the pretty dreams of childhood, and of the race's childhood, disappear and are replaced by knowledge that his mission is one which leads to no glorious victory on earth, but instead to torment and to death.

Mr. Anderson, who is not content with minor themes, writes of these things poignantly and with dignity. In the end he goes beyond his narrative to find in Jesus a symbol of all men who seek God in their own ways and in whose courage and fidelity lies whatever hope there is of the race's ultimate victory. He has, as he usually has, great things to write about and vital things to say. But this time he has written in monotone, and all his eloquence is muted. There is dignity in "Journey to Jerusalem" and grave thought, but very little dramatic fire. In spite of its theme, it seems to me Mr. Anderson's most routine play in many years.

He tells his story in various scenes. He shows us Herod Antipas, by grace of the Romans, king of the Jews, in half-frenzied terror of a coming messiah. And then he lets us see, on a tenderly human plane, the life of Joseph and Miriam, living simply in a little house in Nazareth with their son, Jeshua. Joseph and Miriam half suspect, half fear the destiny of their son; go to the Passover observance at Jerusalem fearfully, because Herod has set a census taker at the gates to search for a boy of twelve, born in Bethlehem. And Jeshua is only a gentle boy of twelve, suspecting nothing.

On the way and afterward they meet a hill robber, Ishmael, and after Jeshua has talked, as a gifted boy might talk, with the men of the Sanhedran, he talks with Ishmael, who alone is sure that the boy is the messiah. From Ishmael Jeshua learns that he is not to lead angels and rule radiantly over the world, but is to be rejected and to die shamefully. Then, and in later scenes, we see the boy change as he glimpses the future, comes to accept it and the agony and spiritual majesty which are to be part of it. And it is then that Anderson pictures Jesus as a symbol of all men who must saw what is in them to say, even if they die for it. It is Mr. Anderson's recurrent theme, and a fine one it is.

The narrative is simple and straightforward and the writing, less ambitious than usual, clear and now and then eloquent. But the writing is never equal to the theme. Compared to what the story asks of it, the writing is pedestrian. "Journey to Jerusalem" is a little play about great things.

Jo Mielziner's designs and lighting make the physical stage exciting, which merely underlines the failure of the play to strike fire. Elmer Rice has directed it admirably and the acting, without being in any way exceptional, is always sufficient. Or perhaps it is in one way exceptional—the playing of Sidney Lumet as Jeshua has a translucent quality and a kind of shining simplicity. None of the older players seemed to me to provide much more than dignified background. This fault is at least partly Mr. Anderson's of course.

'JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM'

A play in three acts by Maxwell Anderson; staged by Elmer Rice; scenery and lighting by Jo Mielziner; costumes by Millia Davenport; presented at the National Theater on October 5, 1940, by the Playwrights Company. The cast:

Marius	Arthur L. Sachs
The Greek Woman	Fay Baker
Herod	Frederic Tozere
The Soothsayer	Joseph V. De Santis
Mira	Alice Reinheart
Joseph	Horace Braham
Jacob	Ronny Liss
Miriam	Arlene Francis
Jeshua	Sidney Lumet
The Beggar	Joseph Wiseman
Shadrach	Charles De Sheim
Cassia	Terry Harris
Reba	Jeanette Chinley
Jesse	Edwin Vail
Zebulon	Alan Manson
The Centurion	Karl Malden
Ishmael	Arnold Moss
The Robber	Paul Genge
The Scribe	Henry Lascoe
The Porter	Walter Kapp
Gennesareth	David Leonard
Malachi	Joseph Kramm
Abbas	Charles Ellis
Chorazim	George Fairchild
Hanan	Byron McGrath
The Dove Woman	Juliet Talbot
The 1st Money Changer	Arnon Ben-Ami
The 2d Money Changer	Joseph Wiseman
The Pharisee	Henry Walden
The Fruit Seller	Joseph Blanton
The Matzoh Seller	Katherine Cody
Flaccus	Paul Genge
Festus	James Gregory

Reprinted from NEW YORK TIMES, *October 7, 1940*

Maxwell Anderson's 'Journey to Jerusalem' Is a Story of the Boyhood of Christ

By BROOKS ATKINSON

IN A PREFACE to "Journey to Jerusalem," which was acted at the National on Saturday evening, Maxwell Anderson points out that the Gospels tell us very little about the life of Christ during the middle years. "The years between the beginning and the end of His life are left almost a blank in the New Testament biographies," Mr. Anderson declares. In the Gospel according to Luke there is record of a pilgrimage to the Passover at Jerusalem when Jesus was 12 years old, and when He confounded the wise men of the Sanhedrim with His knowledge and wisdom. Mary and Joseph, Luke says: "Found Him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions, and all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers."

This Passover pilgrimage is the subject of Mr. Anderson's newest play, with young Sidney Lumet acting the part of Jesus. In the opening scenes Mr. Anderson shows the mystical Herod, son of the slaughterer of the innocents, reading the portents in the sky and plotting the destruction of the unknown Messiah. The main body of the drama chronicles the journey to Jerusalem—the boyish Jesus trudging with His parents through the dangers of the hills, where political outlaws live, and along the by-ways watched by the Roman centurions.

Joseph and Mary suspect, but dare not wholly believe, that their son is the Messiah. During an incident of the journey the prophet Ishmael recognizes Jesus as the Messiah and foretells the story of His life. From what Ishmael tells Him and from other incidents Jesus realizes that He is the appointed one. "Journey to Jerusalem" is the story of his spiritual awakening.

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What may we fairly expect of a play about Jesus? May we not expect it to exalt us or to illuminate His life in respect to our own? This reviewer is asking himself these questions in an effort to explain the disappointment of "Journey to Jerusalem." As far as he goes, Mr. Anderson is unexceptionable. His characterizations of Joseph and Mary and other Bible figures are affectionate without being maudlin. The subject does not terrify him. A man of taste and knowledge, he can skilfully recreate the casual life of the time of Christ. A gifted writer with a caustic mind, he can also strike off sparks occasionally that relate the spiritual and political times of holy Palestine to our own. With the wide vision of a poet, Mr. Anderson is at home in any period.

But these are negative virtues. "Journey to Jerusalem" lacks size and passion. Writing on the outside of his theme, like a respectful chronicler, Mr. Anderson does not enkindle it. The story is loosely knit, the characters are more associated than related; the incidents are stated rather than dramatized, and Mr. Anderson's occasional comments are pronouncements rather than evocations from the depths of a theme that has been explored and possessed.

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This impression may be due in part to the fact that young Sidney Lumet is not up to the role he is playing. A likeable lad with obvious talent for the stage, he is at loose ends in the scenes that require him to dominate the stage and his accent is unsuited to a country boy—defects that become of exaggerated importance in a drama about Jesus. Under Elmer Rice's direction, there are some excellent performances in other parts. Horace Braham and Arlene Francis act with particular beauty the parts of Joseph and Mary, and Arnold Moss invigorates the whole drama with his Ishmael. Jo Mielziner has blessed the production with some magnificent settings, and Millia Davenport's costumes are beautiful, also.

Although "Journey to Jerusalem" does not set a theatregoer down, it does not exalt him. In the circumstances that amounts to the same thing.